

The Claims

1. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method comprising:

creating a license pack at a license generator, the license pack containing a set of one or more individual software licenses;

signing the license pack with a digital signature of the license generator;

associating an ID of the license pack with a license server, the ID uniquely identifying the license pack;

maintaining the association at the license generator.

issuing the license pack to the license server;

verifying, at the license server, the license generator's digital signature on the license pack; and

distributing the software licenses contained in the license pack from the license server to corresponding clients.

2. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, further comprising creating a license pack containing a predefined number of software licenses.

3. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

creating a license pack ID at the license generator; and

evaluating the license pack ID at the license server.

4. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

encrypting the license pack at the license generator; and
decrypting the license pack at the license server.

5. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, further comprising creating a license pack that is tailored to a particular operating platform of the clients.

6. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, further comprising determining an authenticity of an individual client prior to distributing the software license to that individual client.

7. (Canceled).

8. (Canceled).

9. (Canceled).

10. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, wherein the license pack has a license pack ID, and

further comprising granting additional licenses for the license pack having the same license pack ID.

11. (Canceled).

12. (Canceled).

13. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method for distributing software licenses to clients so that the clients may legally execute underlying software to which the software licenses pertain, the computer-implemented method comprising electronically issuing the software licenses as digital certificates that are distributed in one-to-one correlation with individual clients and traced to an issuing authority, and issuing a software license to a particular client only if a client executable image received from the client matches a stored client executable image for the particular client.

14. (Previously presented) A computer-readable medium having computer readable instructions for performing the method as recited in claim 13.

15. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method comprising:

receiving a request for a software license from a particular license server,

creating a license pack containing a set of one or more individual software licenses;

assigning a license pack ID to the license pack, the license pack ID uniquely identifying the license pack;

associating the license pack ID with the particular license server;

digitally signing the license pack; and

issuing the signed license pack to the particular license server.

16. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 15, further comprising creating a license pack containing a predefined number of software licenses.

17. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 15, further comprising creating a license pack that includes a platform type indicating a type of operating platform for which the software licenses can be used.

18. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 15, further comprising creating a license pack that includes a predefined number of software licenses, a platform type indicating a type of operating platform for which the software licenses can be used, an expiration date indicating a date on which the software licenses will expire,

and a product ID that identifies a product with which the software licenses can be used.

19. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 15, further comprising encrypting the license pack.

20. (Previously presented) A computer-readable medium having computer readable instructions for performing the method as recited in claim 15.

21. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method comprising:

receiving a request for a software license from a particular client;

determining an authenticity of the particular client, wherein the determining includes:

maintaining a set of client images;

receiving a client software ID from the particular client; and

comparing the client software ID to the client images to evaluate whether the client is authentic;

selecting a software license from a pack of software licenses that is appropriate for the particular client, the software license having an associated license ID;

associating the license ID with the particular client; and

granting the software license to the particular client.

22. (Canceled).

23. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 21, further comprising granting the software license as containing the license ID, a platform type indicating a type of platform in use by the particular client, an issue date indicates a date on which the license is issued to the client, an expiration date that indicates a date on which the software license will expire, a product ID that identifies a product with which the software licenses can be used, a client ID that identifies the particular client, and a version of the software license.

24. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 21, wherein determining the authenticity comprises:
receiving a client software ID from the particular client; and
evaluating the client software ID to determine whether the client is authentic.

25. (Canceled).

26. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 21, further comprising:
determining a platform of the particular client; and

selecting the software license as is appropriate for the platform of the particular client.

27. (Previously presented) A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 21, further comprising encrypting the software license using a public key of the particular client.

28. (Canceled).

29. (Previously presented) A computer-readable medium having computer readable instructions for performing the method as recited in claim 21.

30-44. (Canceled).

45. (Previously presented) A system for licensing software, comprising:

a license generator to create a license pack containing a set of one or more individual software licenses, the license generator digitally signing the license pack with a digital signature;

a license server remote from, but operatively coupled to, the license generator to receive the license pack from the license generator, the license server verifying the license generator's digital signature on the license pack

and storing the individual licenses for subsequent distribution to individual clients; and

wherein the license generator is further to assign a license pack ID to the license pack and keep an association of the license pack ID with the license server, the license pack ID uniquely identifying the license pack.

46. (Canceled).

47. (Original) A system as recited in claim 45, wherein the license generator encrypts the license pack using a public key of the license server.

48. (Original) A system as recited in claim 45, wherein the license pack contains a preset number of software licenses.

49. (Original) A system as recited in claim 45, wherein the license pack identifies a type of operating platform for which the software licenses can be used.

50. (Previously presented) A system as recited in claim 45, wherein the license pack comprises at least one of the following items:

a predefined number of software licenses;

a platform type indicating a type of operating platform for which the software licenses can be used;

a product ID that identifies a product with which the software licenses can be used.

54. (Original) A system as recited in claim 45, wherein the license server distributes the software licenses to the individual clients via one or more intermediate servers.